

Can You Keep a Secret?

by Chryss Yost

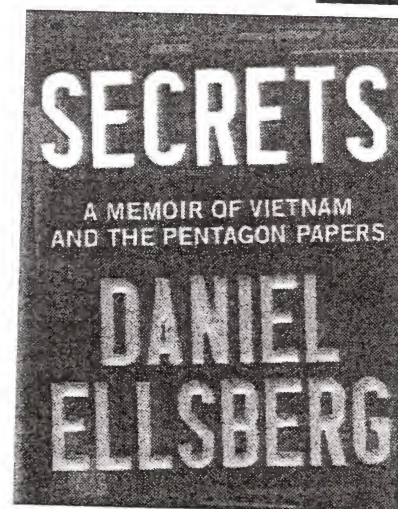
WHERE THE TRUTH LIES: We appreciate that you don't want to hurt our feelings, but we know you don't like us. You don't trust us, and why would you? Tabloid journalism has made it harder than ever to consider the press a reliable source of information. Easy enough to recognize when **Bat Boy** graced the cover of the *Weekly World News*, it is harder to dismiss sensationalist or distorted reporting when it is delivered by one of the **Dan Rathers**. You distrust the press (book columnists excepted, of course). Certainly, going to the press was the last resort for **Daniel Ellsberg**, the whistle-blower who deliberately leaked top-secret documents to the press, setting in motion actions that would eventually topple a presidency and end a war. Ellsberg waited 30 years to publish his memoir, *Secrets: Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers*. Working as part of a national security think tank, the Rand Corporation, during the Vietnam War, Ellsberg had access to evidence most Americans could never expect to see. He saw the war "first as a problem, next as a stalemate, then as a moral and political disaster, a crime." Even with his connections to the highest levels of government, including Henry Kissinger, Ellsberg grew frustrated in his attempts to bring an end to the war. He copied the Pentagon Papers, a 7,000-page study of U.S. policy in Vietnam under five presidents. He leaked the documents to Congress, and when Congress failed to take any action, he released them to the press, and all hell broke loose.

Labeled a traitor by **President Nixon's** White House, the Watergate break-in crew was dispatched to Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office in an effort to ruin him. He was eventually tried on a dozen felony charges. Why did he wait over 30 years? "If I'd written *Secrets* 10 years ago, or 20 years ago, I think people would have seen it as a history, maybe an interesting story, but not even I would have seen any immediate relevance to it... I don't think there's been a time in the last 30 years that has so reproduced the events I was writing about, such as the assertions of presidential power to make war." Ellsberg will be speaking at UCSB this Friday, October 25. It pays to remember your history.

Enough about that. Let's consider the fun side of secrets: **Sue Grafton** mysteries. She'll be signing the latest, *Q Is for Quarry*; at Chaucer's on October 30. Grafton doesn't make nearly enough local appearances to satiate her ravenous fans, so get in line **now**.

Another local author **Elizabeth Spurr** released three, yes *three*, new children's books this spring: *A Pig Named Perrier*, *Two Bears Beneath the Stars* (note clever tie-in with "secrets" theme), and *Surfer Dog*. Selected as one of the year's 50 best books for children by *Child* magazine, *A Pig Named Perrier* and its author will be feted at—where else?—This Little Piggy Wears Cotton, on November 6, from 11 a.m.-noon.

books unbound



Whistle-blower Daniel Ellsberg will be telling his *Secrets* at UCSB this Friday.